2024 Significant Code Changes for Multifamily

This summary includes changes to the International Building Code (IBC), International Energy Conservation Code (IECC), International Existing Building Code (IEBC), International Fire Code (IFC), International Mechanical Code (IMC), International Plumbing Code (IPC), and International Wildland-Urban Interface Code (IWUIC). These are not all the changes that were approved.

2024 IBC

- **Section 104 Duties and Powers of the Building Official.** Section 104 is reorganized and expanded, especially the alternative materials and methods provisions. Many of the changes better capture the use of evaluation reports, research reports or engineering analysis to justify alternative methods. Two concerns are empowering the building official to require the builder provide a copy of the standard governing a listed product and empowering the building official to require a signed and sealed engineering report design for an alternative product where an ICC-ES or other evaluation report is not provided. Similar changes to the corresponding Chapter 1 section are made across the family of I-Codes.
- **Section 202 High-Rise Building.** The proposal revises the definition of High-Rise Building to be triggered by an occupied floor or roof more than 75 feet above fire department access. A building for which providing an occupied roof would trigger the high-rise classification could see impacts that fundamentally affect the floor layout such as triggering a fire command center or requiring separation of stairways.
- **Section 903.3.1.2.3 [IFC 903.3.1.2] NFPA 13R sprinkler systems.** For Group R-2 buildings, NFPA 13R systems can be used where the highest point of the roof assembly is not more than 45 feet above the lowest level of fire department access. This restores the ability to use NFPA 13R systems in many four-story multifamily buildings instead of full NFPA 13 systems, partially reversing what a change in the 2021 IFC effectively required.
- **Section 1107.2 Electrical vehicle charging stations.** The provisions for electrical vehicle (EV) charging stations were modified so R-2 occupancies are no longer exempt. At least one charging station and up to 5% of such spaces provided for use by residents will now need to be accessible. The change could result in an equal number of accessible EV spaces and accessible standard spaces needing to be provided. R-3 and R-4 are still exempt.
- **Section 1110.6 Laundry equipment.** A minimum number of washers and dryers in a common laundry room are now required to be accessible in all cases, instead of being adoptable via an appendix. This exceeds Federal law as the Americans with Disabilities Act does not require the shared areas of multifamily buildings to comply; Fair Housing Act accessibility requirements only require accessible washers/dryers in an accessible dwelling unit.

- **Section 1807.2.5 Guards.** New provisions are added requiring guards along retaining walls adjacent to an open walking surface more than 30 inches above the grade below the wall unless the area adjacent to the wall cannot be accessed by the public. The guard would generally need to be a minimum of 42” in height and any openings (e.g., balusters or pickets) not allow passage of a 4” sphere. Terraced landscaping incorporating segmental units, timbers or other retaining wall materials could potentially need a guard along each terrace.
- **Section 2308.11.4 Wind Uplift.** An exception is added allowing uplift forces to be determined from the truss design drawings or construction documents and Table 2308.11.4 providing required rating of uplift connectors is revised to correlate with ASCE 7-22. The table generates higher connector loads than a similar IRC table as the IBC revisions assume a lighter weight for the roof assembly.
- **Section 2510.6 Water-Resistive Barriers.** The water-resistive barrier requirements for stucco are modified to apply over all exterior structural sheathing products, not just wood-based sheathing. An exception is provided for wall assemblies where accumulation, condensation or freezing of moisture will not damage the materials.
- **Section 2510.6.1 Dry Climates.** The dry-climate water-resistive barrier requirements for stucco are modified to allow the use of a material tested for minimum drainage efficiency as an option in dry climates over one layer of 60-minute Grade D paper or ASTM E2556 Type II-compliant material. The existing options for a drainage space or layer of non-water-absorbing material (typically an additional layer of 10-min Grade D paper or house wrap or a layer of foam plastic insulating sheathing) are maintained.
- **Section 3302 Owner’s Responsibility for Fire Protection.** Detailed requirements specifying the owner’s responsibility for fire protection are added, including criteria for a site safety plan, instructions and criteria for daily fire inspections, and circumstances of violations. The language could be open to over-enforcement by the fire marshal and potentially creates conflicts if a jurisdiction adopts NFPA 1.

2024 IEBC

- **Section 306.6 Additions.** The accessibility provisions for existing buildings are modified so only the number of dwelling or sleeping units added to an existing building are required to meet accessibility requirements. This correlates the IEBC with FHA accessibility guidelines.
- **Sections 503.4 and 805.3 Existing structural elements carrying lateral load.** New exceptions specify added photovoltaic panel systems weighing 5 pounds per square foot or less or mechanical units weighing less than 400 pounds do not trigger consideration of increased lateral loads due to the weight of such systems. This could reduce the cost of complying with energy efficiency retrofit mandates.

2024 IECC

As of the initial posting of this significant changes document the 2024 IECC had not been published due to the consideration several appeals raising concerns about provisions that may preempt Federal law or that related to electrification and climate change rather than the efficient use of energy by the building. Key expected updates for the 2024 IECC residential provisions include:

- Overall energy efficiency level will go up by 6-7% of the whole-house energy use.
- Multiple compliance measures will be added for each climate zone to increase design flexibility including higher efficiency equipment, efficient appliances, ducts in conditioned space, onsite renewable energy, and others.
- Ceiling insulation requirements should return to the 2018 IECC levels and added design flexibility should be included for wall insulation in climate zones 4 and 5.
- The performance path will be revised and expanded to allow for equipment trade-offs and to recognize duct location.
- Several electrification-ready measures will be also added including EV-ready, solar-ready, and electric circuits at water heater and gas stove.
- The Energy Rating Index (ERI) path will be updated to improve its usability.
- Provisions for existing buildings will be also substantially updated.
- The code will also include several appendices that can be adopted by jurisdictions that decide to go above minimum code: zero net energy appendix, electric energy storage appendix, all electric buildings appendix, stretch code appendix, operational carbon rating and reporting appendix, and onsite renewable energy appendix.

2024 IFC

- **Section 903.3.1.2 [IBC [F] 903.3.1.2.3] NFPA 13R sprinkler systems.** For Group R-2 buildings, NFPA 13R systems can be used where the highest point of the roof assembly is not more than 45 feet above the lowest level of fire department access. This restores the ability to use NFPA 13R systems in many four-story multifamily buildings instead of full NFPA 13 systems, partially reversing what a change in the 2021 IFC effectively required.

2024 IMC

- **Appendix D Clear Air Delivery.** This new appendix requires mechanical systems in Group A, B, E and I occupancies to be sized for a design airflow to accommodate a MERV 13 filter. If the appendix were adopted by a state or jurisdiction the requirement would apply to Group A or B spaces in a mixed-use multifamily building.

2024 IPC

- **Section 606.1 Location of full-open valves.** This proposal limits the

requirements for individual shutoff valves to multiple-tenant buildings with three or fewer stories. Water distribution pipes in taller buildings have a vertical instead of horizontal orientation. Therefore, it is not possible to provide a separate shut off valve for the entire tenant space.

2024 IWUIC

- **Section 504.5.1 Flashing.** Exterior surfaces of exterior walls must be noncombustible materials for 6 inches vertically from the intersection with ground or decking. The requirement may create conflicts with flashing the intersection of an attached deck with an adjacent building and limit the types of flashing that can be used.
- **Section 504.10 and 505.10 Vents.** Roof, attic, foundation, and underfloor vents in Ignition-Resistant Class 1 and 2 construction must either be a listed vent product tested to ASTM E2886 or be non-combustible corrosion-resistant mesh with a maximum 1/8-inch mesh spacing. Listed products are not available for all types of attic and foundation vents and are more expensive than simply using tighter mesh spacing, and either way the net free area may be reduced, requiring more vents.